

Croatia - 2024 Biennial report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee

This summary provides key highlights from the first Biennial report on the Child Guarantee implementation in Croatia. It is not exhaustive or evaluative.

Roll-out of key services

Early childhood education and care: Investments in the construction, extension, upgrading, reconstruction and equipping of child care facilities, with 342 projects increasing capacity by 21,316 places, totalling €213.43 million. The *amended law on Preschool Education* prioritises enrollment for at-risk children and includes programmes for inclusion.

Education and school-based activities: Institutions with a significant Roma population receive additional support for vulnerable groups, promoting extracurricular and sports activities.

Healthy meal each school day: Participation in the *free school meal program* rose from 60% in 2022 to 96.6% in 2023. The Ministry of Health will improve data on nutrition in child care in alignment with WHO standards, increasing the number of schools with functional kitchens to 915.

Healthcare: School doctors conduct mental health risk screenings for children aged 13 to 15. In 2022/23, 5% of 13- to 14-year-old and 10% of 14- to 15-year-old exhibited mental health risks.

Adequate housing: In 2022, 522 families with children at risk of poverty were identified for housing support. In 2022, 414 families received housing support, and 492 families in 2023.

Alternative Care: Amendments to the *Social Welfare Act* will introduce social housing for young people leaving care. Ongoing efforts to enhance integrated social services, improve interdepartmental cooperation, and prioritise keeping children within their families or close relatives.

Resources

- [Full Biennial report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee](#)
- [Croatia Child Guarantee National Action Plan - An overview](#)
- [Eurochild Croatia Country Profile](#)

Monitoring and Evaluation

The development of Croatia's NAP was led by the National Coordinator, involving an interdepartmental working group comprising representatives from various ministries, international organisations, and civil society. To ensure effective coordination and monitoring, the *Committee for Coordination, Monitoring, and Evaluation* was established in November 2023 to oversee the implementation of the NAP, evaluate progress through a monitoring framework, and report findings to the Government, Parliament, and European Commission. The implementation of the NAP is supported by UNICEF to develop relevant indicators.

Funding to implement the Child Guarantee

The implementation of Croatia's NAP is funded by the EU Funds, including the *Instrument for Technical Support*, the *European Social Fund +* and the *Human Resources Development Programme (2021-2027)*.

Target groups

The target groups have been identified in the National Action Plan and [Eurochild's overview](#).

Lessons learnt and further development

The Pilot Program *Phase III Guarantee for Every Child in Croatia* resulted in recommendations aimed at improving national policies and monitoring mechanisms were developed, especially for the Roma communities, who represent a significant proportion of guaranteed minimum benefit recipients. Following the program's 33-month implementation in Međimurje County, access to child protection services and early childhood interventions improved. Continuous improvement and adjustments will be made based on the monitoring framework.

Relevant trends

- The AROPE rate for children decreased from 17.1% in 2021 to 16.1% in 2023.
- The AROPE rate for households with dependent decreased from 15.1% in 2021 to 14.9% in 2023.
- The AROPE rate for single-parent households decreased from 37.5% in 2021 to 24.4% in 2023.
- The rate of AROPE families composed of two adults and three or more children decreased from 22.8% in 2021 to 20.5% in 2023.
- The number of children from vulnerable groups participating in school extracurricular activities increased from 470 in 2019 to 840 in 2023.
- Between 2020 and 2022, the rate of children in residential care increased from 1,260 to 1,279. The number of children in family-based care decreased from 2,271 to 2,116.